

Suggested Activities

MISSIONARY CHILDHOOD ASSOCIATION USA



Then I turned my face to the Lord God, seeking him by prayer and pleas for mercy with fasting and sackcloth and ashes. Daniel 9:3

If you were to ask your students what the purpose and meaning behind the season of Lent is, they would most likely respond with prayer, fasting, and sacrifice. They are correct, of course, the Catholic Church teaches that Lent is a period of forty days before Easter Sunday, during which the faithful are called to do penance, fast, and pray to prepare themselves for the resurrection of Our Lord, Jesus Christ. This period also serves as a reminder of Jesus' fast of forty days before His Passion.

But what can we teach our children about the call to conversion? As Ash Wednesday approaches, we have an opportunity to remind children that yes, Lent comes every year, and is always 40 days, but each year brings a new opportunity to change our course, reflect, and embrace the teachings we hear on Sunday so that our lives can change in a positive way during this season, bringing an even deeper understanding of prayer, fasting, and sacrifice. As stewards of the Missionary Childhood, this presents an amazing opportunity to reengage our students in their calling to be Missionary Disciples!

When we receive ashes on Ash Wednesday, we are reminded to turn away from sin and live the Gospel. In Baptism, we were cleansed and reborn in Christ. Our Baptism calls us to live as followers of Christ and to be missionaries of the Gospel every day. Children have an opportunity to live differently during this Lenten Season and grow as the missionaries they were called to be at their baptism.

Blessed Teresa of Calcutta said: "As Lent is the time for greater love, listen to Jesus' thirst... 'Repent and believe' Jesus tells us. What are we to repent? Our indifference, our hardness of heart. What are we to believe? Jesus thirsts even now, in your heart and in the poor—He knows your weakness, He sees their need. He wants only your love, wants only the chance to love you, and to extend His love, through you, to the poor."

May these resources for Lent help you aid your students in understanding the simple yet meaningful teachings of Lent and encourage them to embrace the spirit of conversion during this holy season.

LENT 2024

This Lent I will show my love for Jesus by doing something for him each day. To show what I have done, I will color a cross each day to match one of the good deeds below.

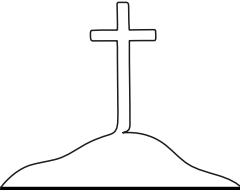
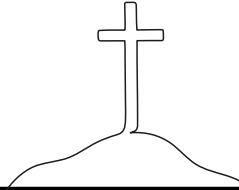
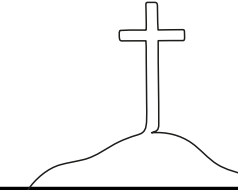
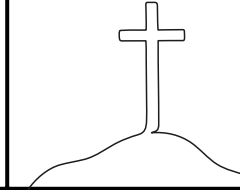
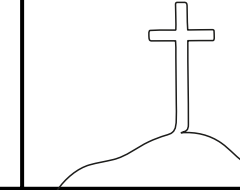
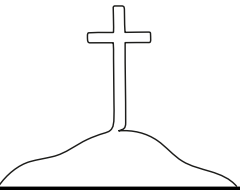
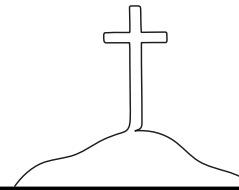
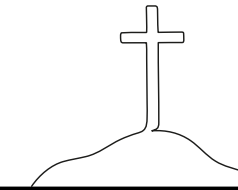
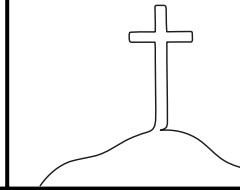
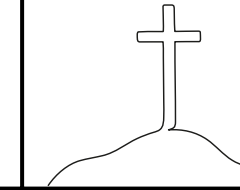
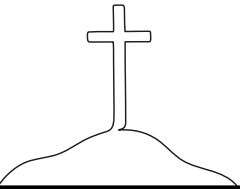
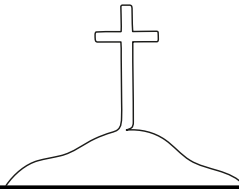
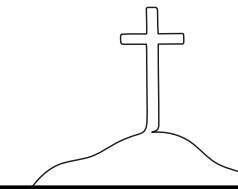
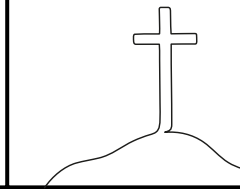
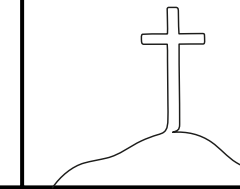
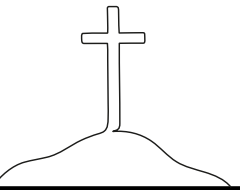
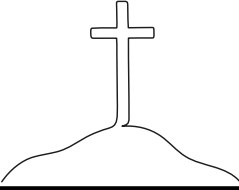
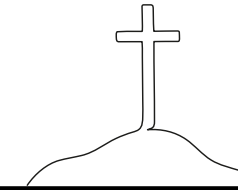
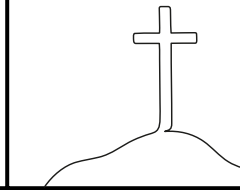
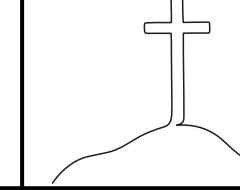
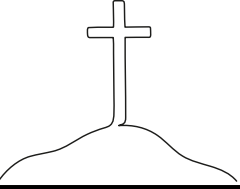
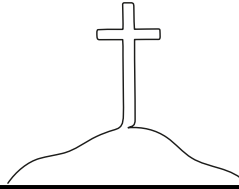
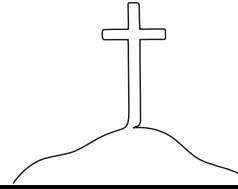
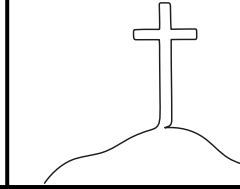
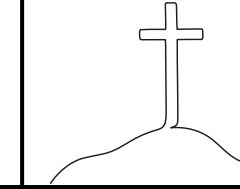
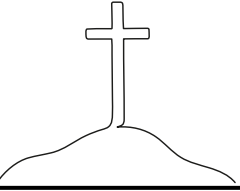
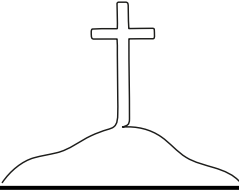
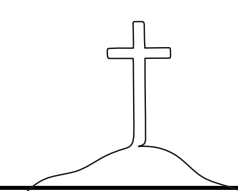
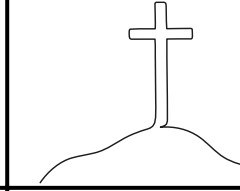
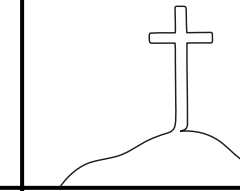
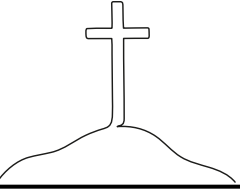
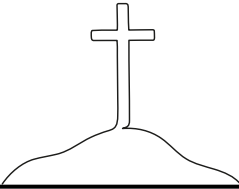
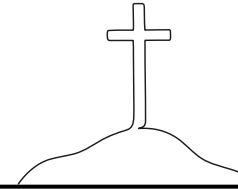
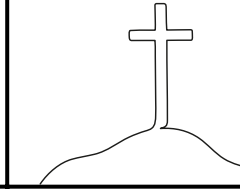
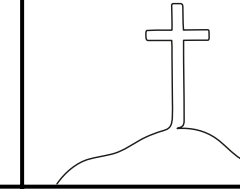
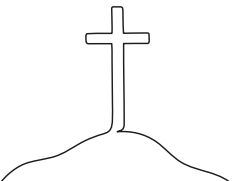
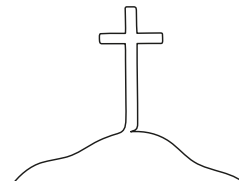
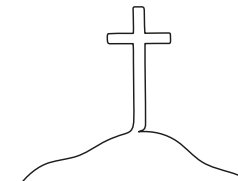
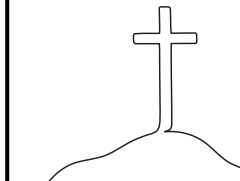
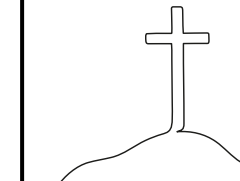
PURPLE CROSS: I prayed and made a sacrifice for the Missions

BLUE CROSS: I helped someone.

YELLOW CROSS: I said an extra prayer.

GREEN CROSS: I did something good that was hard for me to do.

RED CROSS: I did what I was supposed to do without being told.

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PRAYER SERVICE

INTRODUCTION – LEADER:

Today we are going to think about giving. There are some things we give that we can see, like a card or a present, and there are some things we give that we can't see. Can anyone think of an example of a gift you can't see? How about love, kindness, and friendship? We can also give to others by making a sacrifice. A sacrifice is when we give up something for someone or do something difficult for them. When we give things like love and friendship, or when we make a sacrifice for someone, we are 'giving ourselves'. This is a very special gift, and it is something that Jesus shows us how to give. As Missionaries during this Lent, think of ways you can sacrifice for the Missions, in tangible ways and beyond.

Gospel Reading: Luke 4: 1-13

REFLECTION:

We are tempted in similar ways to that of Jesus. When we give in to temptation, we are separated from God little by little. Lent is a time to reunite and remove the space between us. Giving of ourselves, as we learned above, can help to bring us back to a close relationship with God. Take time to think about how we can grow close to God again through our sacrifices and giving.

LEADER: Lord Jesus, fill us with the power of Your Holy Spirit. Help us to make more meaningful sacrifices.

ALL: Lord, guide us in our giving, and bring us closer to You

LEADER: Lord Jesus, fill me with the power of your Holy Spirit. Help us to reject temptation and grow closer to You

ALL: Lord, guide us in our giving, and bring us closer to you

LEADER: Lord Jesus, fill me us the power of your Holy Spirit. Strengthen us in our conversion as we deepen our journey as Missionary Disciples this Lent.

ALL: Lord, guide us in our giving, and bring us closer to you

ALL: Amen!





Mission Inspiration

SAINT JOHN'S PRIMARY SCHOOL MALAWI



Meet Lawrence! He is the 14-year-old head boy at St. John's primary school outside of Lilongwe. The school educates more than 5,000 students in grades K-8, with about 70 teachers on staff. The facilities can't handle all of the children at once, so their schedule is broken up into sessions – half in a morning session, and half in an afternoon session.



The children at the school know all about TPMS because it was funded by MCA 60 years ago in 1963!

The children have grown up with the understanding that since children around the world sacrificed so they could have their school, they must also sacrifice so that other children can be supported by MCA in projects today. After touring the school grounds, Lawrence gave a small speech expressing his gratitude for TPMS and the Catholic Church providing free primary school education to the children across 13 villages that St John's serves. Despite the success of this project, the school still faces a lot of challenges, primarily the structural maintenance of the classrooms.

Many of the classrooms leak during the rainy season because of cracks in their walls and foundation. This is very scary for the students! Especially those younger than Lawrence, who fear that the walls could cave in on their class. They also have open-air classrooms, which are completely exposed to the elements.

Since desks are in such short supply, they are reserved for the 7th and 8th-grade students preparing to take exams. Many classrooms for younger students lack basic resources such as books, writing materials, and desks or chairs.





Mission Inspiration

SAINT JOHN'S PRIMARY SCHOOL MALAWI

Class schedules are written on the walls on big sheets of paper, next to writings of class rules, proper etiquette, and drawings or grammar phrases in English and Chichewa – the local language. Uniforms are provided when available, but the need for basic materials such as shoes is evident across all ages.

Despite the tremendous lack of resources, the children demonstrated a love of learning and appreciation for their education. As Missionaries, we must bear witness to the struggles of our brothers and sisters in Mission lands. Now that we know about the lives of children just like us at the St. John's Primary school, we have a responsibility to share our time and talent with those most in need. During Lent, we are called to pray, and sacrifice for those most in need. Will you make a promise this Lent to giving up something meaningful during Lent? Can you sacrifice something that brings you joy, and instead put it towards a school or child in need in the Missions?

Reflection and Activity:

One little boy at the school said his favorite subject was English because he liked to write stories, but with his lack of shoes, a uniform, and a small mostly empty backpack, do you think he can easily access paper to write any of those stories down?

Discuss with your class the various subjects in school, take a poll of the student's favorites. Break into groups to discuss what elements of that subject would be difficult to learn without the supplies and tools that students in the United States have access too.

Pray and Sacrifice:

*Dear Lord,
Please help the children who attend the St. John Primary School. May our sacrifices during Lent, help support them as they learn and grow. Please help us to be better Missionaries as we learn more about children just like us.*

\$1 can help get pencils and chalk for the classroom

\$10 can go towards a desk for one of the younger students

\$25 buys construction materials nails, etc.